Ted Davis

Questions:

1. What is your hometown? Knoxville, Tennessee
2. If you could move to another city, would you? No.
3. If so, what city?
4. What neighborhood do you live in? Central Gardens
5. How long have you lived in Memphis? Since 1992.
6. How would you describe the City of Memphis in three words? Inviting, relaxing, and marvelous.
7. What were your first impressions of Memphis? My first impression was it was just amazing. When I first came to Rhodes as a prospective student it was St. Patrick’s Day and I remember standing in Overton Square with it being blocked off from Huey’s east through the square and I just thought where I grew up in Knoxville Tennessee there is not a setting like this in my first eighteen years there and I had just been to Memphis for one day and thought this is great. This would have been in 1985.
8. What is your current impression of Memphis? Out City has some issues but some issues that not every big city has. If you are going to live in a metropolitan area, a top 25 city, you are going to have some crime but so much about Memphis’s history is written about the color of people’s skin and race I just wish that that would erode and go away. And we would build the future of the City on what is positive and happening now. I take such pride; I look at Crosstown and I see what is going in there and that building was vacant when I came to Rhodes. When you think of a building being vacant for thirty years and then takes the interest to put businesses in and the YMCA and apartments I think it is just going to be another center for people to congregate and every business will be there reacting and supporting the others. That is what our City needs.
9. Do you feel Memphis has improved while you have lived here? Yes! In lots of ways. When I came to Memphis 35 years ago I think we have improved in regards to neighborhoods, people looking out for their neighbor and not living in a kind of backyard community. People live in their front yards, they’re visible to their neighbor, they’re helping whether its mowing their grass or helping them cut down some limbs. I just think there is more of a community in one’s neighborhood that there may not have been. I think most are now.
10. What is your funniest story about living in Memphis? When I first came to Rhodes it was something like the feeling of going from middle school to high school. There were these urban legends; when I was an eight-grader there was an urban legend that there was a smoking pit behind my classroom that underclassmen were thrown into it and beaten up before I went to high school. So there were some nerves. When I left Knoxville Tennessee , a city of two hundred thousand to move to Memphis, a city which was obviously the largest metropolitan area in Tennessee, you know Rhodes is an urban campus so one of my first weeks on campus the closest place off campus to cash a check or get soda or a beer, it is an Exxon now but it used to be a 7-11. And I can remember stories of freshman at Rhodes going to the 7-11 and people coming up to them and asking if they wanted to buy this VCR. It would be a VCR box and one of my classmates was offered a VCR for $15 or $20 and they bought this VCR and they get it home and it was just a box of rocks. And that was my first impression of Memphis was that I was just too naïve to leave the walls of Rhodes College because it was a metropolitan city. Whenever I am approached by someone, which happens very often in the City, asking for money or trying to sell you something, you know you have to have city wits to live in the area.
11. If you could change something about Memphis, what would it be? Well both of my daughters went to private schools. So if there is anything I can change about Memphis , but the stereotype when people come to Memphis is that they are told immediately that they not need to live in the inner city and that they need to join the white flight into Germantown or Collierville and they are told that our school system sucks. But I hear great stories about White Station. And when you consider the cost of private schools for fifteen years that is an extreme burden on the middle class that you have no viable public school options. So if I could change something about Memphis, and bring three hundred thousand dollars back to my wallet I would make the public schools in Memphis like the public school available in other communities.
12. This web site only captures a snapshot in time. What would you like someone twenty years from now who reads this to know about you? I would like for them to know that I was a proud Memphian and that I would do anything to look after and protect my neighbor and an honest and sincere person who would do anything for my neighbor and friend.
13. What is your favorite thing about Memphis? I love the food! I love Memphis food. When I used to live in Greensboro, North Carolina I daydreamed about a Huey’s hamburger or a Rendezvous rib or a Gibson’s doughnut or a Gus’s fried chicken. I just think that Memphis has the most incredible food from places that are total hole in the walls to best dining. My fiancé’s friends, when they come from New York they go to Tsunami and they think Tsunami is one of the best restaurants in the country. My favorite things about Memphis are the people and the places I can eat.